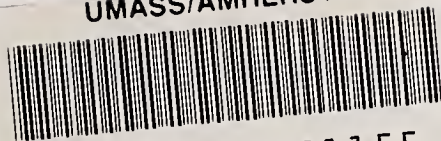


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Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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Executive Office of Education

FEB 15 1994

Charter School Application

Designated Contact Person

EXECUTIVE OFFICE
OF EDUCATION

Please provide the Executive Office of Education with the following information identifying a designated contact person for the group submitting an application for charter school status. This form *must* be filed along with the charter school application no later than February 15, 1994. Please mail all required materials to:

Secretary of Education
ATTN: Charter Schools
Executive Office of Education
One Ashburton Place, Room 1401
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Tel: (617) 727-1313

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
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University of Massachusetts
Depository Copy

Please print or type:

Heueristics

Name of organization/group filing for charter school status

Contact Person Name:	Loretta M. Heuer	
Signature:	Loretta M. Heuer	Date: 2/14/1994
Title:	Director	
Address:	164 Norfolk St.	
City:	Holliston,	
State:	MA	
Zip:	01746	
Telephone:	(508) 429-1436	
Fax:		

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Education

Charter School Application

I/We, the undersigned charter school applicant(s), do hereby certify that the information provided herein and filed with the Executive Office of Education on this the 14th day of February (month) of the year 1994, is to the best of my/our knowledge, truthful and accurate.

(This signature sheet *must* be attached to the application when it is filed.)

Name: Loretta Heuer Signature: Loretta M. Heuer Date: 2/14/94
Address: 164 Norfolk St. City: Holliston State: MA Zip: 01746
Tel: (508) 429-1436

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
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If more space is required, please attach additional sheets.

Executive Office of Education, One Ashburton Place, Room 1401, Boston, MA, 02108

1.) Mission Statement:

Describe the core philosophy or underlying purpose of the proposed school.

Heueristics: A Homeschool Charter School will be a K-12 center for innovative, family centered learning. Its mission will be to assist parent-facilitators as they implement their childrens' individualized educational plans.

It will help parents and students formulate yearly educational plans that recognize and honor each student's developmental level, learning style and interests.

Heueristics will also:

- * approve students' home education plans
- * monitor and assess student progress
- * circulate curricular materials (printed material, manipulatives, software) and equipment
- * suggest instructional materials and methodologies for optimal learning
- * provide professional development to parent-educators
- * offer workshops, courses and field trips to students
- * contract with private practitioners for educational services when necessary
- * facilitate internships, apprenticeships and volunteer opportunities for interested students
- * enable individual homeschooling families to form a community for learning opportunities and mutual support.

This mission is based on the philosophy that parents can be their children's teachers, educators and facilitators of learning beyond the preschool years. It is grounded in the belief that learning is constructed from rich experiences both at home and in the community, and that meaningful learning is interdisciplinary and contextual in nature. In addition, this type of learning is reflective and tends to have an affective component as students become self-regulated learners growing toward maturity. It believes that students can begin to assess their own needs and seek out appropriate learning opportunities, teachers and mentors, and to work in dynamic relationships with them. It also believes that time on task may either collapse (in an intensive study of a topic) or expand (filling several years with incidental, incremental learning.) Finally, it recognizes that evaluation needs to be an ongoing process and that alternative, performance-based assessments are productive tools by which to acquire feedback and improve instruction.

2.) School Objectives:

A. What are the school's broad academic objectives for student learning?

Heueristics will recognize and honor the various academic objectives that are formulated for each student. In general, we would expect that by the age of sixteen the students would display levels of competence through excellence in classical and contemporary learning: literature, oral and written communication, mathematics, the natural sciences, the behavioral sciences, cultural studies, U.S. and world history, government and political science, computer science, creative self-expression in the arts, critical/analytical thinking, and personal/academic management.

B. Describe non-academic goals for student performance.

Each child's family may define non-academic goals for the individual student. We would expect that the student would display ongoing growth and development and that he or she would become a confident, self-directed, coachable yet independent learner. The student would also recognize learning opportunities of an interdependent nature and utilize team activities to foster personal and intellectual growth. Finally, we hope that students will critique their own products and become reflective learners.

C. What type of community environment do you hope to foster at your school?

Because homeschooling families are often a marginalized population, lacking a local support system, community-building will be an integral part of Heueristics. We will attempt to develop four types of communal experiences: parent-to-parent support groups, student interest groups, multi-age whole family activities and community involvement. While the focus of these experiences may appear primarily interpersonal and intrapersonal, we believe that important academic learning will result from an atmosphere of support, trust, challenge...and fun!

3.) Statement of Need:

A. Why is there a need for this type of school?

- * Potential homeschooling parents are apprehensive about the legal and procedural issues surrounding home education. A charter school serving their needs would support their decision, offer accurate information and resolve this aspect of the homeschooling process.

- * Parents are often given the impression by school personnel that only institutional (school-at-home) models of education and assessment are permitted. This may be due to the fact that those given the authority to approve an educational plan are often school personnel with backgrounds in administration rather than in curriculum and instructional practices. A charter school dedicated to serving the needs of homeschoolers would introduce families to alternative models of curriculum, methodology, time-on-task and evaluation.
- * Even when parents are aware of these options, school personnel often make it difficult for families to implement innovative educational practices. The school would actively encourage families to utilize the models that best honor the learning style and developmental level of the individual child.
- * The financial aspect of home education is a factor that homeschooling families are willing to confront. However, certain dynamic materials (trundle wheel, pattern blocks, microscope, chemistry supplies, computer software, etc.) are prohibitively expensive for single family purchase. Having a library of resources available on a rental or circulating basis would enhance student learning and permit extension of the curriculum.
- * Field trips, museum visits and travel are all opportunities for home learning. When done in concert with other families, group visits can be scheduled with a docent and preparatory/follow-up activities can be more fully implemented.
- * Families who are attuned to contemporary research in education can take advantage of these developments quickly, if not immediately. This is in contrast to traditional institutional schooling where there is significant lag time, where theories and materials take years to put into practice. A charter school dedicated to homeschooling will keep families informed of these developments so that contemporary educational practices can be included in their children's educational plans.
- * Because of the tutorial nature of the homeschool experience, many conditions which are considered diagnosed moderate special needs in an institutional setting can be addressed in the home by interactive materials, alternative instructional methods, flexible scheduling of the school day, etc. Parents will be supported in their search for appropriate learning opportunities to meet their children's

special needs.

- * Homeschooling families often lack access to and knowledge of opportunities that are routinely presented to traditionally educated students. A charter school would be in a position to receive mailings and information from educational resources. Information could then be disseminated to families so that they could broaden the scope of their activities. Being in a public charter school would also provide students with coverage so that they could participate in conferences, festivals, exhibits, etc.
- * Apprenticeships and internships are a potential resource for adolescent homeschoolers. Researching opportunities for individuals and overseeing the experience would be appropriate functions of this charter school.
- * Home educated students, even in supportive school systems, meet impediments when seeking credentials at the high school level. Therefore, Heueristics will request authority to grant a high school diploma. A Diploma of Secondary Education will be granted for successful Exhibitions in the content areas (Mathematics/Science, the Arts, and History/Philosophy) described by TheodoreSizer in Horace's School (pp. 145-147).
- * Adolescent home educated students facing the college admissions process would find it useful to have the charter school as a central processing center. The school could shape alternative educational experiences into a comprehensive and comprehensible transcript to effectively communicate a student's achievements and academic mastery to a college admissions office.
- * Home education is truly a laboratory experience. Scholars interested in cognitive theory, alternative assessment and reengineered education may find this unique homeschool/charter school a rich resource for research.

B. Explain why a charter school would help effectively address this need.

Prior to reform legislation, parents of home educated students needed to file an annual educational plan with and were held accountable to their local superintendent or school committee. Having a public charter school dedicated to serving the needs of home educators would mean that all legal

requirements could be met while a more comprehensive educational program could be implemented.

4.) School Demographics:

A. Describe the area where the school will be located. If a facility has already been secured, please state so.

We envision Heueristics to be located in the Framingham/MetroWest area. We have not yet secured a facility.

B. Why was this location selected? Are there other locations suitable to the needs and focus of the school?

Parents considering homeschooling in neighboring towns have often called us at our home in Holliston to ask for information and advice. We believe that there is an existing and potential homeschooling population in central/eastern Massachusetts that would find a MetroWest location convenient.

C. Describe any unique characteristics of the student population to be served.

Population would be drawn from families who chose to take personal responsibility for the education of their children.

D. What is the school's anticipated enrollment?

If the school is opened in 1995, initial enrollment probably would be offered to approximately 50 students or 35 families, whichever is less. Growth would be anticipated during the five year charter.

However, because of the unique nature of such a school, a large institutional facility is not necessary. Thus, the school could begin in the fall of 1994 with as few as 10 students.

E. What grade levels will be served? How many students are expected to be in each grade or grouping?

Students Kindergarten through 12th grade would be served. Within the stated enrollment there would be no upper limit to the number of students in any one grade or grouping.

5.) Recruiting and Marketing Plan

A. Demonstrate how you will publicize the school to attract a sufficient pool of applicants.

B. Specifically, what type of outreach will be made to potential students and their families?

There appear to be three groups of potential applicants:

- * families of currently enrolled school children who are looking for an alternative to the institutional model of schooling
- * families of preschoolers who are considering home education for their children
- * families who are currently homeschooling their children

A marketing plan aimed at reaching these groups would most likely be devised in conjunction with a person or group that had expertise in marketing. Many strategies would be explored.

Press releases would be submitted to local and regional newspapers; interviews would be arranged. Boston and local cable television networks would be contacted for possible feature stories. Radio talk shows would be another media outlet that could be used to disseminate information. Informational meetings will be arranged in the Boston, Worcester, MetroWest, North Shore, South Shore and Cape areas, using current homeschoolers as contacts and liaisons.

Organizations and institutions that provide services to parents of preschoolers would also be targeted so as to introduce the charter school concept to prospective homeschooling families.

The school will be publicized in articles and advertisements in national and regional homeschooling publications. Mailing lists of subscribing homeschoolers would be acquired through these publications. Explanatory sessions will be held at regional homeschooling conferences where we would also have an exhibit table where interested individuals could ask questions and pick up relevant literature. The school's mission and philosophy will be discussed in the school reform and homeschooling sections of national computer networks. Informal, word-of-mouth networking also will be utilized.

6.) Admissions Policy:

A. Describe the admission methods and standards you will use to select students.

Interested families would file a preliminary statement

of interest after reviewing the school's formal mission statement, philosophy and description of services. An informational interview with parent and child would follow so that roles and responsibilities of all parties would be understood. A needs assessment for each student's educational needs would be done during the interview, and dialogue would be initiated to determine if Heueristics offers the oversight and services that the family wishes. If it does, the family will file a declaration of intent to enroll and the student will be accepted.

B. Explain how these policies further the mission of the school in a non-discriminatory fashion.

All students whose families subscribe to the mission, philosophy and accountability described in the charter will be accepted.

7.) Profile of the Founding Coalition:

A. Describe the make-up of the group or partnership that is working together to apply for a charter.

Loretta Heuer is applying for the charter as an individual, pending the incorporation of Heueristics. Ms. Heuer has homeschooled her two children for the past 12 years. She is also a former classroom teacher, certified K-8. She has designed professional development programs for practicing teachers, supervising teachers during the implementation phase. She has worked as an educational consultant in mathematics, both for homeschooling families and for the New England School Development Council. In addition, she has done elementary school facilities studies for NESDEC. A graduate of Cambridge College with a Master's of Education degree, her thesis project focused on the integration of homeschooling, alternative methodology and performance assessment.

B. Discuss how the group came together, as well as any affiliation with existing school, educational programs, businesses, non-profits, or any other entities or groups.

Not applicable.

C. Include any plans for further recruitment of founders or organizers of the school.

If Heueristics receives a favorable eligibility determination, contacts who have expressed an interest in charter schools, alternative instruction and assessment, and homeschooling will be notified and recruited. In addition, university research projects might find the school's philosophy and methodology interesting concepts that warrant organizational support.

8.) Timetable:

A. Discuss a timetable of events leading to the opening of a charter school.

Incorporation papers would be filed as soon as the charter was granted. Issues regarding insurance coverage, marketing plans, and staffing will be finalized once eligibility is established.

If a target date for opening is set in the fall of 1995, a marketing consultant would be used to develop an overall recruitment plan during the summer of 1994, and the 1994-1995 school year would be spent publicizing the school.

Facilities would be researched during the fall and winter of 1994 with rental commencing in the spring or early summer of 1995.

Parents would submit applications for admission in the spring of 1995. Interviews would be held before the end of the school year.

Basic materials would be ordered in the spring of 1995.

Families of enrolled students would develop and submit their educational plans following acceptance. Review and approval of the plans would occur prior to the beginning of the conventional school year.

Purchase of additional materials and contracting for educational services would result from the needs outlined in educational plans.

B. If preparing for a 1994 charter, demonstrate the feasibility of opening school doors this fall, in the event of a legislative change in the starting date.

Due to the unique nature of a homeschool charter school, an initial enrollment of as few as 10 students would be possible for the fall of 1994. Several of the marketing strategies outlined above could be implemented before the end of this school year. Acquiring suitable space seems possible, because the school would not require the rental or purchase of a large institutional facility. An outlay of capital would be needed to purchase materials, furniture and office supplies. Staffing would be minimal during this phase. Because of the nature of the school, transportation would be also family-centered, although the option of local district transportation granted under the reform act would be utilized when feasible. Incorporation and insurance coverage would be investigated immediately.

9.) Evidence of Support:

A. Try to convey as clearly as possible the scope of community backing for the proposed charter school.

Current and prospective homeschooling parents are the targeted community who would find this type of charter school meeting their needs——

B. In tangible terms, such as a survey or letters of support, demonstrate this community support among teachers, parents, students, community leaders or others.

For the past twelve years, as a homeschooling parent and professional educator, I have listened to the frustrations of parents who have tried to confront conventional educational systems, trying to make them responsive to their children's needs. When they finally decide to remove their children to a home education environment, they lack support and guidance. They often call me at home, asking how to devise, write and submit an educational plan. Often, they need support to implement what they have planned. Newsletters targeted at homeschoolers address some of these issues, but I have found that one-to-one dialogue with parents is a critical part of the process. Although they begin with great enthusiasm, homeschooling parents soon meet obstacles regarding choice of materials, scheduling, family dynamics, methodology, educational philosophy, etc. Managing these issues in isolation takes valuable time away from the education of their children. Comprehensive and efficient models of support need to be provided. I believe that a charter school dedicated to the needs of these families, who have demonstrated a willingness to take an educational risk, is a concept whose time has come.

10.) Educational Program:

A. In detail, describe the educational program of the school.

Since each family and each child will evidence different needs, the program of the school would focus on creating a good "match" of student and program.

B. What is the basis for teaching methods to be used?

Since many homeschoolers have been led by school personnel to believe that text-oriented, school-at-home learning is the only way to meet public school accountability standards, it would be a function of Heueristics to expose families to the variety of educational models from which they can select the most appropriate, personalized plan for their child. This menu of choices would include and encourage:

- * a spiral rather than a segmented curriculum
- * interdisciplinary unit studies
- * developmentally appropriate activities and methodology
- * integration of learning into daily life
- * recognition of learning opportunities present in the activities of daily life
- * utilization of televised educational resources
- * computer assisted learning
- * utilization of study skills and research skills in student initiated projects
- * community involvement at the local level
- * interdisciplinary cultural studies at the regional level
- * literature based language arts
- * mathematics programs grounded in the standards set forth by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
- * apprenticeships and internships in areas of student interest
- * coursework given at the school facility by either school staff or practitioners contracted by the school
- * independent study opportunities monitored and mentored by specialists in the field of study
- * multi-age learning dynamics
- * problem-solving opportunities and critical thinking activities
- * group activities sponsored by the school
- * college or correspondence coursework
- * travel-study, exchange student and home-stay opportunities

C. Describe the school calendar and hours of operation.

Homeschooling is a form of education not bound by conventional notions of time. However, we envision that the physical facility would be open during the week for an eight hour day. This would be the time for families to use materials on-site, borrow materials for use at home, hold parent meetings, arrange for field trips, browse through the computer bulletin board, etc.

The facility would be open during the summer months to help parents develop their yearly educational plans, which are submitted for approval in the fall.

Certain dates during the conventional school year would be reserved for group field trips, workshops, on-site courses, etc.

When appropriate, the facility would be open in the evenings. Parent support groups, student exhibitions, performances, and concerts would be examples of evening activities.

11.) Student Performance:

A. Describe your proposed plan to assess student performance.

While families would have the option of standardized tests given at the facility, we would introduce families to the concept of alternative evaluation methods and encourage their use. Portfolio reviews, performance assessments, problem solving opportunities, anecdotal reports and public exhibitions are all well-suited to the individualized nature of the home education process. Training parents to be astute observers of educational progress would be part of the professional development opportunities offered in parent/educator workshops.

B. What remediation will be available for underperforming students?

Families will be offered help in selecting materials and methodology appropriate for students who are experiencing difficulty with their educational plan. Revision of the plan in recognition of the child's developmental level may be necessary. Normally, students will not be described as underperforming. Rather we would consider that some students may be achieving mastery at a slower pace than others their age. This is an important concept in a non-graded curriculum where students' gifts and deficits are recognized and considered in their educational plans.

C. How will the development of skills be measured?

While families can utilize standardized tests to measure skills in a number of limited areas, we would hope that most families will opt for a portfolio review system that demonstrates growth and development over the course of a given time period.

12.) School Evaluation:

A. What methods of self-assessment or evaluation will be used to ensure that the school is meeting its stated mission and objectives?

Parents will be asked to complete an evaluation form that looks at the home school/charter school from various perspectives. Items for consideration may include academic issues, community-building ones, professional development opportunities, etc. In addition, we would encourage both parents and students to submit letters and student work samples to appropriate governance authorities for outside review.

While these would be more formal evaluation methods, parents and students would enter into dialogue with school staff periodically during the school year to assure that their needs were being met. This would provide feedback so that any necessary modifications could be made quickly.

B. How will the school establish regular dialogue with the parents? With the community?

Parents are our educational colleagues. The bottom line is that we honor them and respect them as fellow educators. We are their partners as they attempt to facilitate their children's education. We are here to serve them.

Dialogue will commence with the individual family when the application process begins, and will continue on as frequent a basis as the family requires.

Rather than defining community as a geographical entity, the school will serve as a focus for building a community of parent-educators. Certainly they will be encouraged to participate in and initiate activities in their home community. Opportunities for local action exist in every Massachusetts town, and home educated students are well positioned to take advantage of them.

13.) Human Resource Information:

A. How will teaching and administrative staff be selected? Describe the standards to be used in the hiring process, including teacher certification requirements or any other professional credentials. What is the targeted staff size?

Parents will be the primary teacher/facilitators of the home educated student. However, the school's staff will be recruited from a pool of applicants who are interested in alternative education and are committed to the flexible nature of the process. Potential staff members would have experience with such aspects of alternative education as homeschooling, performance assessment, adult education, interdisciplinary unit studies, whole brain learning, multiple intelligences, etc.

B. How will teachers be evaluated? How often?

The parent, as primary teacher of the home educated student, would be evaluated on the basis of the educational plan submitted and on the agreed-upon student assessment package. Since the school's mission includes ongoing professional development and frequent dialogue with the parent/educator, his or her evaluation will be a process grounded in support and suggestion.

C. Describe any other relevant employee information, including but not limited to salaries, contracts, hiring and dismissal, benefit packages, and staff development,

The school will tend to utilize educators in private practice, contracted to provide services requested by the school population. Their fees will be negotiated accordingly.

14.) School Governance:

A. Describe the internal form of management to be implemented at your school, including any plans to contract to an outside group to manage the school.

The management of the school would be under a director who would be responsible for the daily operations, recruitment of staff, purchasing, deliverance of and contracting for educational services, etc. Financial and legal advisors would be retained.

B. How will the board of trustees be chosen?

The board will be chosen from a pool of applicants who have an interest in home education, curriculum development, alternative assessment, professional development and school reform. While some board members may be professional educators, others may be qualified, although uncredentialed school and/or community members.

C. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the board.

The board will oversee the decisions of the director, as well as the overall financial plan and expenditures.

D. Describe the relationship of the board to teachers, administrators, students and families.

Members of the school community would be represented on the board. This would include both parent and student representatives.

E. Discuss the nature of parent and student involvement in decision-making matters.

In a home education program parents have an essential role in decisions that effect their children and family. After educational plans are submitted, requests for services will be honored as much as possible.

F. Describe the nature and extent of community involvement in school activities.

Because the members of the school community will most likely live in various cities and towns, we would encourage their participation in their hometown activities. We would also attempt to pursue projects in the town where the charter school facility was housed.

15.) Building Options:

A. Describe your present options for a school building.

We have not yet acquired space, but I envision a warm, friendly facility in an area where students are comfortable being outdoors. The space would have areas for a library and materials storage, small group activities, parent conferences and administrative work. It also would have adequate parking facilities nearby.

B. Demonstrate how this site(s) would be a suitable facility for the proposed school.

(Site is still undetermined.)

C. Discuss any progress or future plans for acquisition of a school building.

(Facility acquisition undetermined at this time.)

D. Describe financing plans, if any.

(Financing plans undetermined at this time.)